

Abstract 708

TITLE: Promoting HIV Counseling And Testing To Adolescents: A Multi-City Social Marketing Initiative

AUTHORS: Futterman D*, Wolfson S, Rudy B, Peralta L, Rogers A. for the Adolescent Medicine HIV/AIDS Research Network (AMHARN, NICHD/NIH) (*Montefiore Medical Center, Bronx NY)

ISSUE: It is estimated that one in four HIV+ people in the US were infected by age 21. However, relatively few HIV+ youth are aware of their infection or engaged in care.

SETTING: A social marketing program promoting HIV counseling and testing to youth was developed via a collaboration among an adolescent HIV health program, advertising agency and a health communications agency. The campaign, *HIV. Live with it. Get Tested.* will be implemented in six cities in 1999. New York and Baltimore will be launched in the Spring. Philadelphia, Washington DC, Miami and Los Angeles will occur in the Fall. The lead programs in each city are members of the NIH-funded AMHARN.

PROJECT: The program targets youth in a number of ways. Each city builds a coalition of providers offering free, youth-friendly HIV counseling, testing and health services. The campaign engages young people by using their language and visuals: *AKnockin' Boots? Hittin'the Skins?®* to link having sex with the need for HIV testing. Targeted outreach in high seroprevalence neighborhoods by trained youth peer educators supplements paid ads on radio, transit systems and theaters as well as media coverage and public service announcements. Youth-led town hall meetings kick-off *Get Tested! Week* which serves as a focal point for both grassroots community organizing and media coverage.

RESULTS: The program was piloted in NYC in 1997 and 1998. Outcomes include: over 4000 calls to the campaign's phone line, increased testing visits particularly in areas with extensive community outreach, and local and national media coverage (e.g. Good Morning America, CNN, NY Times, Daily News). The campaign strategy and materials will be presented together with data from the Spring 1999 *Get Tested! Week* in New York and Baltimore.

LESSONS LEARNED: Bridging the separate spheres of HIV prevention and care requires a new paradigm in which promotion of HIV counseling and testing is an integral part of the continuum. Promoting HIV C and T to at-risk adolescents remains challenging, but youth can respond to targeted messages delivered in their language and by their peers. Community linkages/outreach are critical components of social marketing.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Donna Futterman

Address: Adolescent AIDS Program
Montefiore Medical Center
111 East 210th Street
Bronx, NY 10467-2195

Telephone: (718) 882-0322

Fax: (718) 882-0432

E-mail: futterma@acom.yu.edu